obtaining second design data of a rank of hierarchy higher than the predetermined rank of hierarchy, after the obtaining the first design data; and

combining the second design data to the first design data.

5.   (ONCE AMENDED) A computer readable recording medium storing a software program for processing hierarchically configured design data, which when executed by a computer, cause the computer to perform operations comprising:

obtaining first design data of a predetermined rank of hierarchy;

obtaining second design data of a rank of hierarchy higher than the predetermined rank of hierarchy, after the obtaining the first design data; and

combining the second design data to the first design data.

9.   (NEW) A method of designing a hierarchical layout of a circuit, comprising:

receiving a designation of a specified rank from a user;

retrieving design data of the specified rank from a storage unit;

retrieving wiring data of an upper rank from the storage unit, after the retrieving the design data;

setting the wiring data in the design data; and

displaying the design data in which the wiring data has been set on a display unit.

REMARKS

In the Office Action mailed on November 14, 2002, Figures 1-4 were objected to; and claims 1 and 5 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Nishiyama et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,519,630) ("Nishiyama").

Independent claims 1 and 5 are pending in the subject application. Figures 1-4, claims 1 and 5 are amended and new claim 9 is added. Care has been exercised to avoid the introduction of new matter. A Version With Markings To Show Changes Made to the specification and amended claims is included herewith.

Objections to Figures:

The Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner enter the amendments to Figures